

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT:

This report pertains to an investigation of the identification of the burial location, or headstone markings, of a member of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) during the Great War 1914-1921.

SUBMITTED TO:

[CWGC Canadian Agency](#)

66 Slater Street

Suite 1707

Ottawa Ontario Canada K1A 0P4

Att: [Dominique Boulais](#)

Report Date: 23 March 2016

Reason for Submission: ("X" means purpose of the report)

Casualty Identification:		Burial Information:	
Confirmed Identity	X	Burial Location Identified	X
Most Probable Identity		Grave Stone Correction	
Questionable Identity		Grave Records Correction	X
Incorrect Identity		Request for CWGC Details	
Other		Other	

Supporting Documents: (# refers to attachment number; "I" information provided)

Casualty Identification:		Burial Information:	
Hodgin, Bertie	i	Wancourt British Cemetery	link
24 th Infantry Battalion	i	Pas de Calais, France	i
Private #920016	i	Plot 2 Row C Grave 16	i
Death 27 August 1918	link	Date of Burial / Exhumation	i
Attestation Papers	link	Cemetery Schematic	link
Service Record	link	Graves Registration Report	9
Circumstance of Death	1	Concentration of Grave	
CEF Canada Register	2	Headstone Register	
War Diary Extract(s)	3	Casualty Spreadsheet	
Area Map(s)	4	Trench Map Exhumation	
Trench Map(s)	5a,b,c	Grave Stone Photograph	
Possible Candidates List	6	Grave Stone Inscription	
Excluded Candidates List	7	Memorial Inscription/Photo	
Location of Cemeteries	8	Reporting and Review	10

Summary of Findings:

The Graves Registration Report form for Plot 2 Row C Grave 16 lists an Unknown British Soldier of the 24th Canadian Infantry Battalion.

A review of the case provides clear evidence that the remains are those of Private Bertie (Bert) Hodgin #920016 of the 24th Canadian Infantry Battalion, killed in action during the advance from Wancourt to Cherisy on August 27, 1918.

Details of Findings:

The findings are conclusive that the remains in Plot 2 Row C Grave 16 are those of Private Bertie Hodgkin #920016 of the 24th Infantry Battalion, 5th Infantry Brigade of the 2nd Canadian Division.

The findings are based on the following:

1. The *Circumstance of Death File* (COD) states that Private Bertie Hodgkin #920016 was killed in action on August 27, 1918 “*while on duty as a Company runner he was struck on the head by an enemy bullet and killed instantly just in front of Cherisy Village*” (Attachment #1).
2. The *E-13 War Graves Register* (WGR) further states that Pte. Hodgkin was “*killed in the vicinity of Wancourt, South East of Arras, only information on record as at 18/8/21*” (Attachment #2).). As there was no record of burial, his name was added to the Vimy Memorial.
3. The War Diary of the 24th Infantry Battalion provides a very clear report on the action of the unit on the attack on Cherisy on August 27th and 28th 1918 (Attachment #3). Initially the battalion moved to the Brigade assembly positions 1,500 yards east of Neuville Vitasse, which would place them in the sector at **51b.N.21**, to the west of Wancourt. The battalion formed up at *Crow Trench* (**51b.N.30**) in the early morning hours of 27 August 1918. The attack was initiated at 10:00 am, under heavy shelling (gas) and machine gun fire, pushing on the *Mallard Trench* (**51b.O.25**). It was in this area that Private Hodgkin was killed on 27 August 1918, prior to entering the *Village of Cherisy*.

As another soldier of the 24th Battalion (*Private Walter Whitty #841668*) would fall after the unit passed through Cherisy, it is important that we continue the description of their progress. The battalion moved through Cherisy (**51b.O.26 & 51b.O.32**) with little opposition. From there they moved in progression to *Occident Trench Ulster Trench* and *Union Trench* (**51b.O.34-35**). The operation ended at dusk and reconvened on 28 August at 12:30 pm, pushing forward to the wire at Oyster Trench and Union Trench, where they faced heavy machine gun fire. They held those positions until relieved by the 13th Battalion at 2:30 am on 29 August 1918.

4. The attack on Cherisy was part of the larger Battle of Arras, carried out by the Canadian Expeditionary Force from 26 August 1918 until 5 September 1918. The area of Cherisy is depicted clearly in *Nicholson Map #12* (Attachment #4). The 24th Battalion is shown moving in the centre of the 5th Canadian Infantry Brigade, with the 22nd Battalion on the left flank and the 26th on the right flank. They were moving eastward from the area of Wancourt through the centre of Cherisy. On the evening of August 26th- 27th the 24th Battalion was near Wancourt Tower (**51b.O.24.1.0**), approximately one-third of the way from Wancourt to Cherisy. By the night of the 27th-28th the battalion had passed through Cherisy.

5. The travel of the 24th Battalion from Wancourt through Cherisy can be mapped in detail on a period trench map due to the excellent report provided by the battalion war diary, as referenced previously (Attachment #5). The quick movement of the battalion and the ability to map their position was of critical importance to this investigation, as it separated the men into casualty groups by area. Trench Map 5(a) shows the progress from jump off position at Crow Trench to the western edge of Cherisy, followed by Trench Map 5(b) depicting the advance to Union Trench. Trench Map 5(c) then illustrates the movement from Cherisy across Occident Lane, through Union Trench to Upton Wood.
6. The attack on Cherisy by the 24th Canadian Infantry Battalion was unique in that all but two of the men were recovered from the battlefield. The only two that were lost and thus their names placed on the Vimy Memorial, as recorded in the CWGC records, were Private Bertie Hodgkin #920016 and Private Walter Whitty #841688 (Attachment #6).
7. The records do not provide the precise location for Private Walter Whitty, other than we know that he was killed in action after the 24th Battalion had passed through Cherisy on 27 August 1918 (Attachment #7). There were only two (2) men of the 24th Battalion with unknown graves recorded in the CWGC records and there are only two (2) graves in the local cemeteries marked as containing an unknown soldier of the 24th Canadian Infantry Battalion. The records do show that Private Bertie Hodgkin was killed in action in front of Cherisy (*west of Cherisy*) on 27 August 1918. This is confirmed by his E-13 War Grave Register file which states that he was killed in the vicinity of Wancourt, which is to the west of Cherisy. Those locations separate the two Privates of the 24th Battalion. Both are recorded on the Vimy Memorial as having no known grave.
8. The location of the cemeteries, relative to where the men fell in the attacks of late August 1918, is relevant to this case (Attachment #8). As we have shown in our report on [Private Walter Whitty](#), he was killed the day after Private Hodgkin, when the battalion was on the east side of Cherisy heading to Occident Lane and Upton Wood. His remains were buried in the Quebec Cemetery, Cherisy close to where he fell (**51b.O.34.a.2.4**). The remains of Private Hodgkin were buried in the Wancourt British Cemetery (**51b.N.24.c.2.7**) on the west side of Cherisy (*between Wancourt and Cherisy*) where he fell in action as a Company Runner.
9. The *Grave Registration Report Form* (GRRF) for the Wancourt British Cemetery states that there is an Unknown British Soldier of the 24th Canadian Infantry Battalion buried in Plot 2 Row C Grave 16 (Attachment #9). The GRRF also states that the date of death was 1 September 1918. Although the GRRF document says 1 September 1918 for these remains, we know from an examination of the other documents for men reported on that page with a date of 1 September 1918 were KIA on 27 August 1918. The reference to the remains belonging to an Unknown British Soldier is a common error on the GRRF forms but is corrected by the reference to the 24th Canadian Infantry Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

Private Grant Scott #842001 was killed in the attack from Wancourt to Cherisy, in a manner similar to that described for Private Hodgkin. His reported day of death was 27 August 1918, not 1 September 1918 as noted for Plot 2 Row C Grave 1 on the same GRRF. Private Omer Gervais #3156950, noted to be in Plot 2 Row C Grave 14 of Wancourt British Cemetery was killed in the vicinity of Cherisy on 27 August 1918 and apparently his remains were recovered and also recorded for a date of death of 1 September 1918. The CWGC database correctly records his date of death as 27 August 1918. Lastly, the same applies for Private Joseph Brochu #4040076, buried in Plot 2 Row C Grave 16, who was KIA near Cherisy on 27 August 1918 and the GRRF reports 1 September 1918.

Action Required:

The “Investigative Report” has been prepared in accordance with the procedures and criteria set out by the CWGC, should they wish to make any changes to the commemoration details (Attachment #10).

It is our contention that the facts are clear and that Private Bertie Hodgkin # 920016 was killed in action on 27 August 1918, in the area between Wancourt and Cherisy, and that his remains were recovered and buried in Wancourt British Cemetery in Plot 2 Row C Grave 16.

ATTACHMENT #1

1. NO.	2. RANK OR RATING	3. SURNAME	4. CHRISTIAN NAMES
920016,	Private,	HODGIN,	Bert.
5. UNIT OR SHIP	6. DATE OF CASUALTY	7. H.Q. FILE NO.	8. RELIGION
24th Battalion.	27-8-18.	649-H-21076.	Congregationalist.
9. CIRCUMSTANCES OF CASUALTY			
<p>"Killed in Action."</p> <p>While on duty as Company runner he was struck on the head by an enemy bullet and killed instantly just in front of Cherisy village.</p>			
10. LOCATION OF UNIT AT TIME OF CASUALTY			
NOTE:—Items 12, 13 and 14 are not to be completed until grave is permanently located.			
12. CEMETERY	13. LOCATION OF CEMETERY	14. GRAVE LOCATION	15. REGISTERED NO. OF GRAVE
		Grave..... Plot..... Row.....	
16. PHOTOGRAPH OF GRAVE TAKEN	17. EXPOSURE NO.	18. PHOTOGRAPH OF GRAVE AND CEMETERY SUPPLIED TO	
19. FURTHER PARTICULARS ON REVERSE SIDE OF SHEET.			

M. P. W. 2643
12th-1-19
17-12-1729-1448
I. I. 71943-M and P. 10002

MEB.

ATTACHMENT #2

Form E. 13 1897 6m. 21/5/18 D. 262		649-H-21076.		2000	
Reg. No.	Rank	Pte.	Name	File No.	R.L.
920016			HODGIN, B.	25-16-4490	
Unit			24th Battn. (Quebec Regt.)		
Date of Casualty		Nature and Place of Casualty		Next-of-Kin	
27-8-18.		Killed in Action.			
Published on D.C.L.					
No. A. 312					
Date 6-9-18.					
Unconfirmed Burial Report		Grave No.	Authority	Report of Circumstances of Casualty	
Killed in the vicinity of Wancourt, South East of Arras, only information on record as at 16/8/21			649-H-21076	Received from Unit	Forwarded
				Date 15.11.18	Ottawa 4.5.19
				Next-of-Kin	
				Written For	A.A.G. Written
				Date	Date
Confirmed Burial Report		Grave No.	Authority	Burial Report Advised to Ottawa and Next-of-Kin	
				Ottawa	
				Next-of-Kin	
Revised Burial Report		Grave No.	Authority	Revised Report Advised to Ottawa and Next-of-Kin	
				Ottawa	
				Next-of-Kin	

Page No. 5.

WAR DIARY

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Leave heading not required.)

Army Form C. 2118.

ORIGINAL

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II, and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

Remarks and references to Appendices

Summary of Events and Information

Place Date Hour

AUGUST 1918 Continued.

26

The 24th Canadian Battalion V.R.C. had "C" Company on the Right commanded by Capt. R.H. Lamb with "A" Company on the left under Major A.M. Dewar, "B" Company under Captain G.A. McGiffin and "D" Company under Capt. F.I. Walker M.C. in support to "C" and "A" Companies respectively. At ZERO plus 2 hours the brigade moved forward to CHAPLAIN HILL, some shelling was encountered but casualties were very slight and the progress was steady. At 7.00 a.m. "C" and "A" Companies 24th Can. Bn., were established in MOVA SCOTIA Trench (M. 1.0. with "B" and "D" Companies in close support. The remainder of the day was spent quietly.

27

At 3.30 a.m. orders were received by the Battalion to move at 4.00 a.m. to an assembly area behind EGERST TRENCH occupied by the 6th Can. Inf. Bde., there was some shelling during this move but only 2 casualties occurred. The 24th Can. Bn., formed up in CROW TRENCH between M. 24 d. 4-1. and M. 20 A.1-0. The 22nd Can. Bn., was on the left and the 28th Can. Bn., on the right of the 24th Can. Bn., 25th Can. Bn., in support. The 5th ~~Imperial~~ Division was on the right of the 26th Can. Bn., and the 4th Can. Inf. Bde. was on the left of the 22nd Can. Bn., ~~xxxxxxx~~ Zero hour was 10.00 a.m., the attack was launched behind a good barrage in spite of which heavy machine gun fire, including Gas Shells were encountered from the very start and heavy losses were sustained. The Battalion despite this heavy opposition pushed on, and captured MALLARD TRENCH where a large number of Machine Guns, French Mortars and Prisoners were captured. On advancing from MALLARD TRENCH machine gun fire slackened but the shelling increased a large proportion of the shells contained Gas. CHERRY was captured without opposition and no difficulty was found in crossing the river which was practically dry. While the barrage played for 30 minutes on OCCIDENT TRENCH the battalion reorganized and continued the attack, when the barrage lifted capturing OCCIDENT TRENCH and advancing to within about 150 yards of ULSTER and UNION TRENCHES. At this point the enemy Machine Gun fire from both the right and left was very heavy and owing to the flanks having been unable to advance to the line held by the 24th Can. Bn., an outpost line was established with a main line of resistance in OCCIDENT TRENCH. The Battalion was well beyond the range of the field guns by this time and while waiting developments the enemy was seen bringing in reinforcements, consisting of mounted Infantry and Guns which opened fire on us with open sights.

Over Page No. 6.

148000 W.W. 1300/75 75/0000 400 400 25 75/0000/75/0000

Page 1p. 6.

WAR DIARY

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Leave heading not required)

Summary of Events and Information

Remarks and references to Appendices

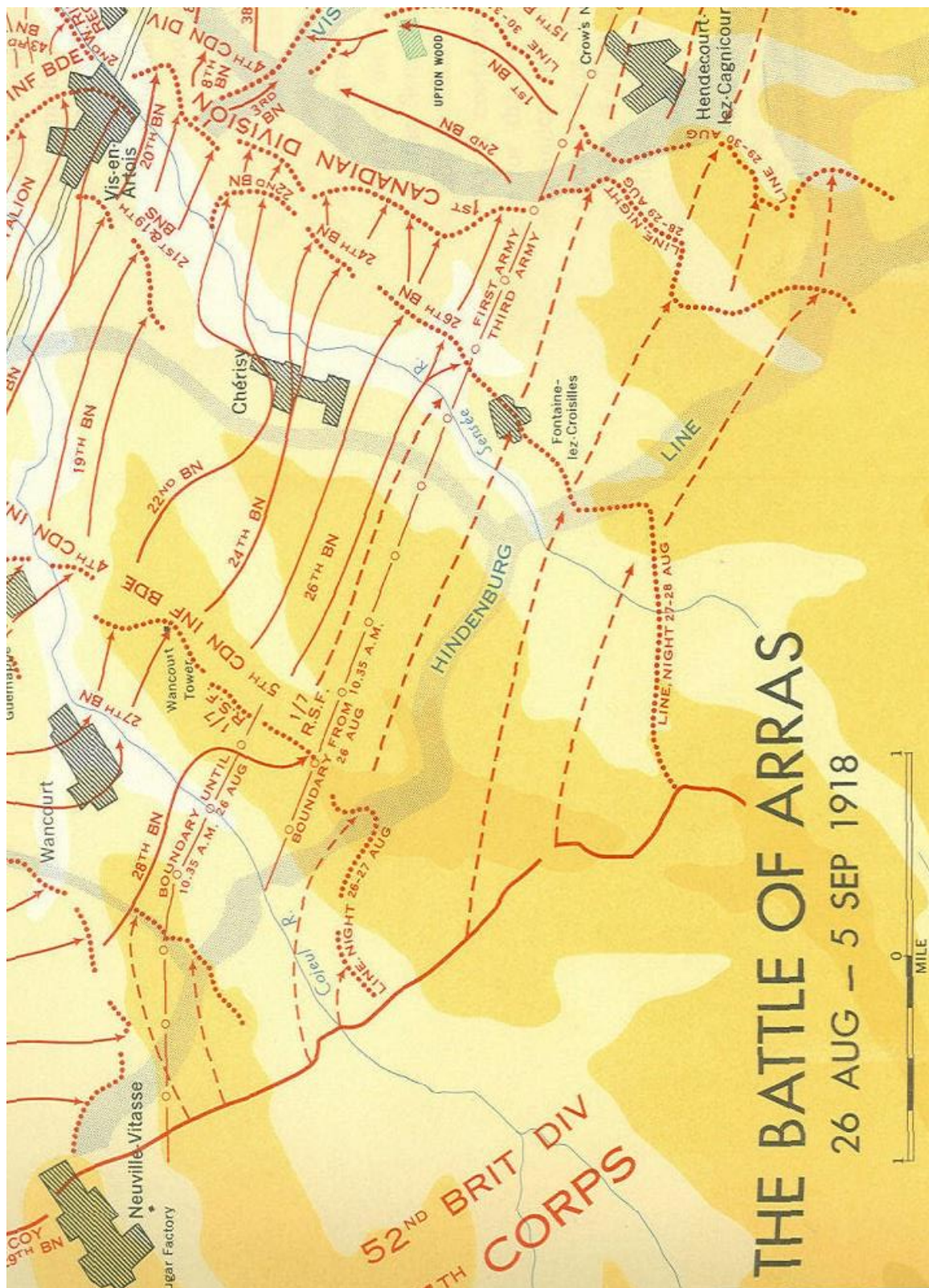
Army Form C. 2118.

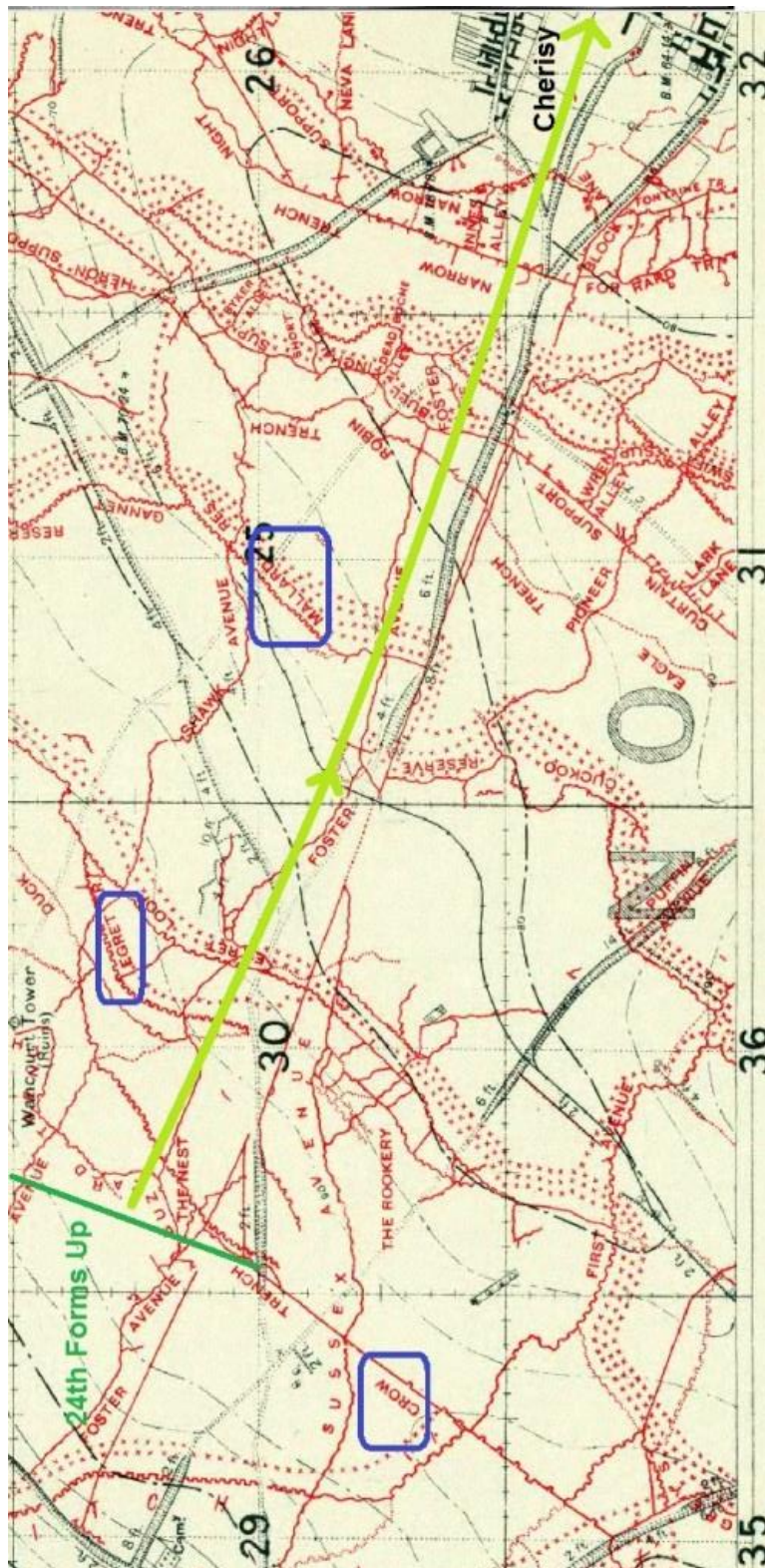
ORIGINAL

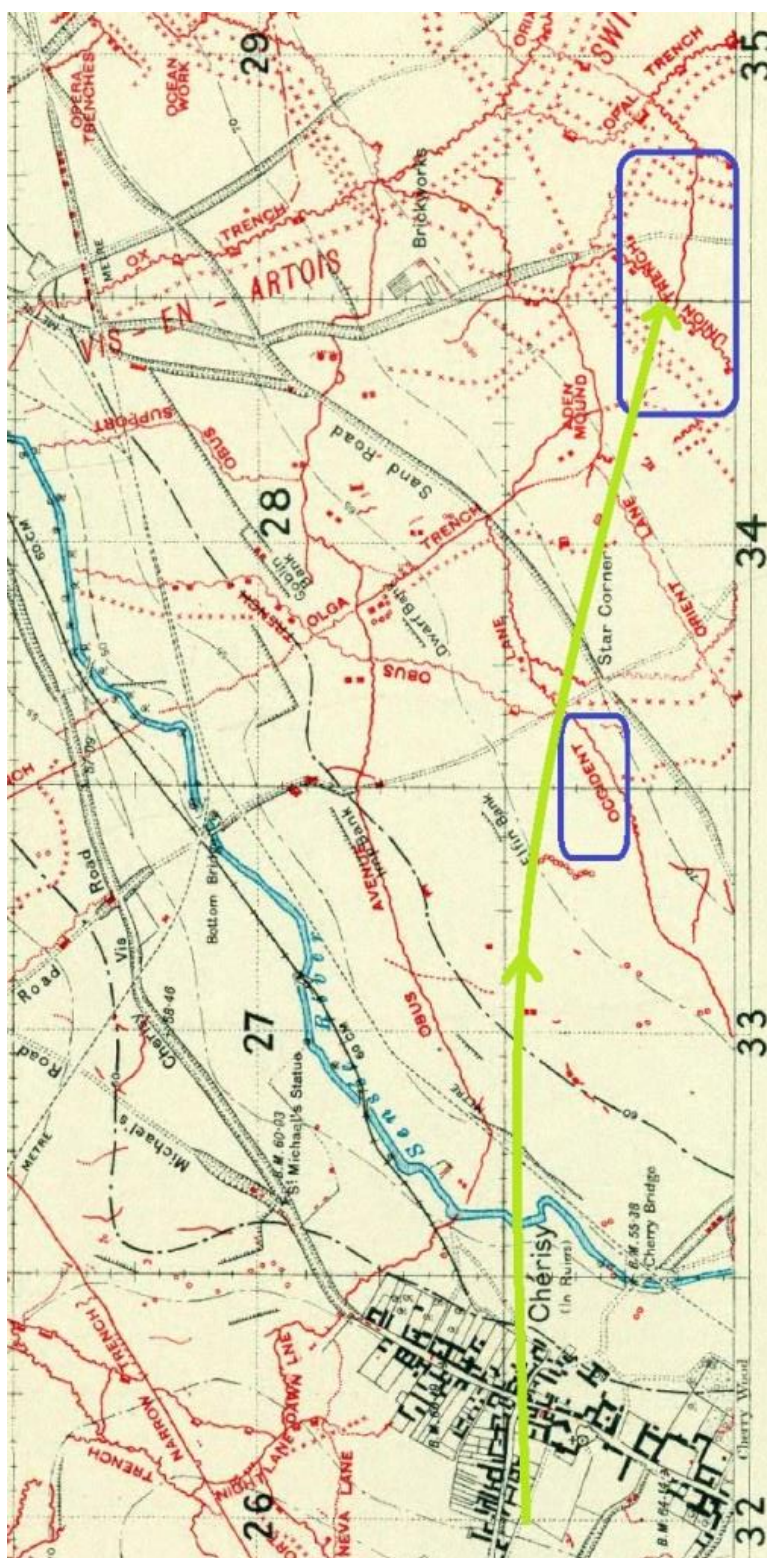
Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Reg. Part II and the Staff Manual respectively. This page will be prepared in manuscript.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
AUGUST 1918. Continued.				
	27		<p>These were engaged by our Lewis Guns but owing to the long range our shooting was ineffective. During this period low flying enemy aeroplanes in large numbers were active over the Divisional frontage. As the Brigade was not in touch on either flanks the attack was temporarily held up and the Machine Gun Company supporting the attack were brought up to protect the flanks, connection was eventually established between the right and left flanks but owing to darkness, further advance was not continued and the operation for the day was ended. The Battalion had incurred the following casualties.</p> <p>OFFICERS.</p> <p>Capt. G.A. Moffitt Killed. Lieut. A. Briggs Wounded.</p> <p>Major J.A. Bales, M.C. Wounded. " T. Redpath "</p> <p>Major A.M. Dewar " A.G.O'Brien "</p> <p>Capt. R.H. Lamb " P.E. McLaughlin "</p> <p>Lieut. G.V.O. Gorman " H.M. Alexander, M.C. Wounded.</p>	
	28		<p>Including R.S.M. J. Hennessy, (M.M.) Killed.</p> <p>At 12.30 p.m. the attack was renewed with "C" Company on the right under Lieut. R.B.M. Wilson, M.C. "D" Company on the left under Capt. P.I. Walker, M.C. supported by "A" and "B" Companies under Lieut. F.H. Morgan, M.C. and Lieut. W. Watson, respectively. The flanking units being the same as the previous day. From the commencement the opposition was more intense than anything previously encountered, but the Battalion pushed forward until the barbed wire in front of ULSTER and UNION BRIDGES was reached. Repeated attempts to get through were made but were unsuccessful, owing to heavy machine gun fire. Throughout the attack the Battalion was subjected to heavy artillery fire which with the Machine Guns caused very heavy casualties, including Lt. Col. W.H. Clark Kennedy, O.M.C., D.S.O. who was wounded in the leg early in the attack. Although unable to move he still continued to direct operations from a shell-hole and largely owing to his leadership and splendid example the Battalion was able to maintain its position, with the 3 Officers and 150 O.Rs. which were left of the Battalion. About 5.30 p.m. when the situation was clear the Colonel agreed to be carried out and Lieut. F.H. Morgan, M.C. assumed command assisted by Lieut. H.R. Tanner and Lieut. W. McMurtry, until the arrival of Major F.B. Hall, M.C. who had been ordered to take command of the composite Battalion formed by the ULSTER and UNION BRIDGES of the 22nd and 24th Canadian Battalions. Over Page No. 7.</p>	
<p>OTHER RANKS.</p> <p>KILLED 19 WOUNDED 190 MISSING 33.</p>				

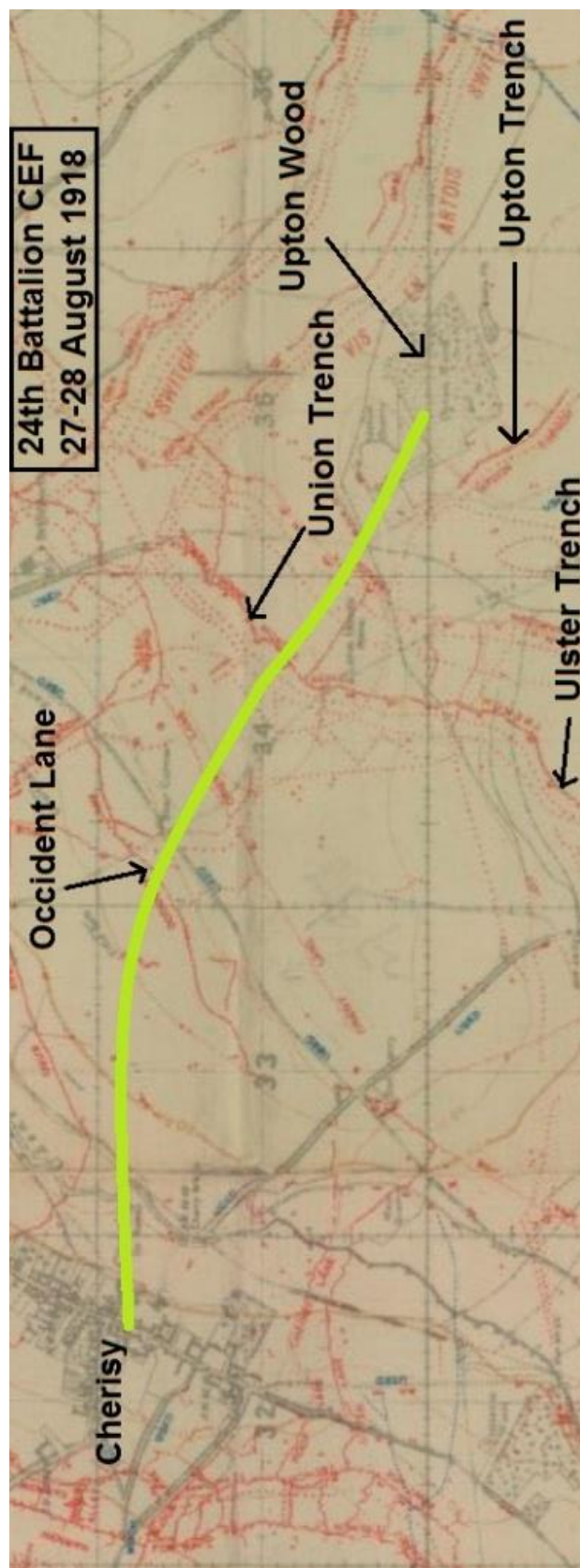
ATTACHMENT #4







ATTACHMENT #5(c)



ATTACHMENT #6

Surname

☒ Initials

☐ Forename

Country
(commemorated in)

Country

Cemetery or memorial

Vimy Memorial

War

First World War

Date of death: (starting)

27

Aug

1918

Date of death: (ending)

02

Sep

1918

2 record(s) match your search criteria

Name	Rank	Service Number	Date of Death	Age	Regiment /Service	Service Country	Grave / Memorial Reference	Cemetery / Memorial Name	Docs.
HODGIN, BERTIE	Private	920016	27/08/1918		Canadian Infantry	Canadian		VIMY MEMORIAL	
WHITTY, WALTER JONES	Private	841688	28/08/1918	24	Canadian Infantry	Canadian		VIMY MEMORIAL	

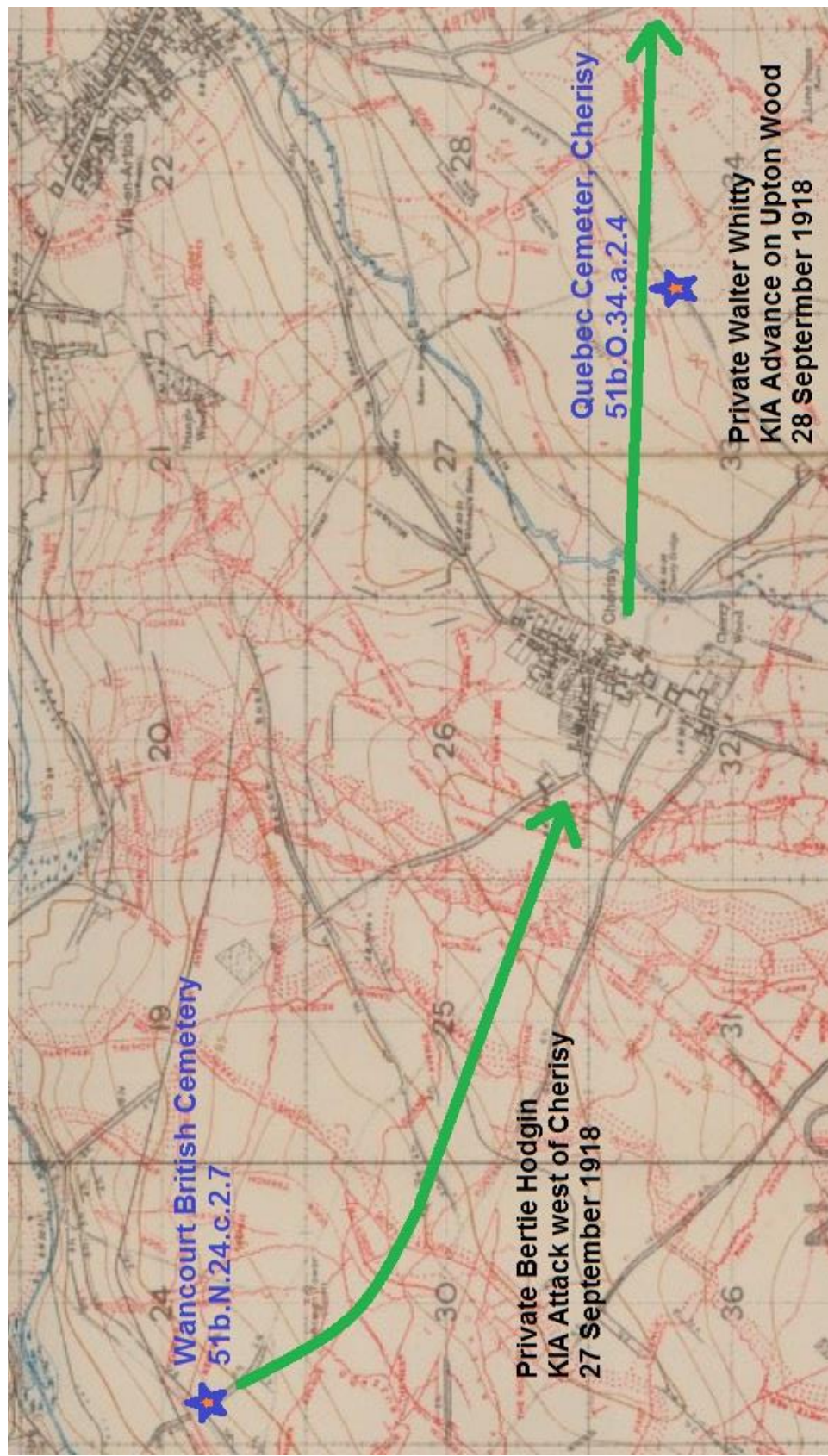
Private Bertie Hodgin

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Wancourt British Cemetery 2.C.23

[illegible]

ATTACHMENT #8



ATTACHMENT #9

MS. COMPREHENSIVE REPORT. 3-8-20. Army Form W. 3372.

GRAVES REGISTRATION REPORT FORM.

THIS CEMETERY HAS BEEN RECONSTRUCTED IN PART.

REPORT No. 13. SCHEDULE No. 18/c.

No. 1 District B/C 241.

Commune:- WANCOURT.

PLACE OF BURIAL WANCOURT BRITISH CEMETERY.

Map Reference 51b.N.24.c.2.7.

The following are buried here:—

Regiment	No.	Name	Rank and Initials	Date of Death	Cross Erected or G. R. U'd.	Plot, Row and Grave R to L.
PLOT 2. ROW C.						
Canadian Bn. 24/London Regt.	842002	SCOTT.	Pte G.R.	1-9-18.	E.	1.
18/Canadian Bn.	802492	KEESHIE.	Pte B.R.	-do-	E.	2.
26/ -do-	710170	BANNISTER.	Pte A.E.	-do-	E.	3.
8/ -do-	829590	NICHOLLS.	Pte W.	-do-	E.	4.
8/ -do-	257196	CLYNE.	Pte F.	-do-	E.	5.
18/ -do-	2355492	ROBB.	Pte A.	-do-	E.	6.
24/ -do-	4040368	GANNON.	Pte W.G.Z.	28-8-18	E.	7.
24/ -do-	3080111	TUNLEY.	Pte H.	-do-	E.	8.
26/ -do-		MCKENZIE.	Cpl. A.E.G.	-do-	E.	9.
13/ -do-	3080254	BRYAN.	Pte J.E.	-do-	E.	10.
18/ -do-	2355841	ARMITAGE.	Pte R.N.	-do-	E.	11.
22/ -do-	856104	PELLETIER.	Pte E.	-do-	E.	12.
26/ -do-	712340	CAMPBELL. or CAMERON.	Pte F.J.	1-9-18.	GRU.	13.
24/ -do-	3156950	GERVIAS.	Pte O.	1-9-18.	E.	14.
24/ -do-	4040076	BROUCHU.	Pte J.	-do-	E.	15.
24/ -do-		UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER.		1-9-18.	E.	16.
22/Canadian BN.	2134905	LESSARD.	Pte H.	1-9-18.	E.	17.

(6 31 5) W1163-P133 45,000 10/17 HWV(P117) Forms/W3372/2
144-P908 70,000 4/18

ENTERED 32
A.C. 10-3-21

ATTACHMENT #10

This “*Reporting and Review*” attachment is provided to assist all parties in the submission of an investigative report related to the identification of the burial location, or headstone markings, of a member of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) during the Great War 1914-1921. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) receives a copy of this report in the event they wish to make changes to the commemoration details. In order to alter the records, the CWGC has set out their criteria for the procedure and submission of cases for review, as detailed below. The CWGC is under no obligation to make changes based on a report.

Procedure:	Guideline Criteria for Submission:
All new identification cases need to be assessed in the first instance by the Canadian Agency (CA) and submissions should go to their office directly. After an initial assessment, if the Agency feels that the case is compelling, they will then pass all the documentation to the Commemorations Team at the Commission's Head Office. Head Office will then review the case and inform the CA of their findings. The Canadian authorities will then decide whether or not any changes to the arrangements for commemoration are required and inform the Commission accordingly.	Cases need to present clear and convincing evidence to prove the identity of a casualty and must not be based on assumption or speculation. The Commission's Commemoration Team will also consider whether the findings of a better informed contemporary investigation are being revisited and if there is any new evidence to consider. By way of example, it is unlikely that the Commission would support a revision of the arrangements for the commemoration where it is apparent that no new evidence is being presented and, a better informed previous decision is being revisited some 100 years later.

The following have participated in the preparation, review and submission of this report on a voluntary basis. Those noted below have read the investigative report and compared it to the criteria set out by the CWGC, as a guiding principle, and have agreed to have their name included as part of the review team. The CWGC may contact any of the reviewers at the e-mail address provided below.

Name	Affiliation	E-mail	Contribution
Richard Laughton	Private Researcher LMC Great War Research Company	rlaughton@laughton.ca	Report Author